

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-8 and 10 are currently pending in this application. Amendments have been made to the specification to cure minor informalities. In the May 12, 2005 Office Action, claims 1-9 were noted as being rejected and claim 10 was noted as being withdrawn from consideration. By way of this Reply, claims 1 and 5 have been amended to more distinctly claim subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention, claim 1, 5, and 6 have been amended for grammatical purposes, and claim 9 has been canceled, without prejudice. Applicant submits that no new matter has been introduced into the application by this amendment.

Claims 1-9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,793,756 (Lee et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,250,146 (Horvath). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and submits that claims 1-9 of the present application are distinguishable from the cited art.

The Examiner expressly admits at page 3 of the Office Action that, the substrate bonding apparatus of Lee “does not disclose the elastic material as claimed by the applicant.” The Examiner relies on the Horvath to resolve the shortcoming of Lee, stating that Horvath discloses an apparatus for laminating materials, comprising an upper ram provided with a layer of silicon rubber.

It is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 of the present invention is distinguishable over both Lee and Horvath, taken either alone or in combination. Claim 1 is directed to a substrate bonding apparatus comprising “an elastic material provided on that part of the retaining surface of at least one of the

retaining tables and being nonviscous at least at a surface which retains the substrate.” As stated above, Lee is distinguishable because it does not disclose an elastic material as recited by independent claim 1. Horvath is distinguishable from independent claim 1 because there is no disclosure of providing an elastic material being nonviscous at least at a surface which retains the substrate. The unique advantages of the features recited in claim 1 are set forth at line 16, page 12 though line 3, page 13. These advantages are not obtained by Lee or Horvath, taken alone or in combination.

Furthermore, with respect to claim 2, Horvath does not disclose dividing the elastic material into a plurality of elastic pieces.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1, and claims 2-4 which depend therefrom, are distinguishable from the cited prior art, taken either alone or in combination.

It is also respectfully submitted that independent claim 5 of the present invention is distinguishable over the cited prior art. Claim 5 is directed to a substrate bonding apparatus wherein the elastic material provided on the retaining surface of at least one of the first and second retaining tables is divided into a plurality of elastic pieces. As stated above, Lee is distinguishable because it does not disclose an elastic material. Horvath is distinguishable because there is no disclosure of dividing the elastic material into a plurality of elastic pieces as recited by independent claim 5. The unique advantages of the features recited in claim 5

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**Application No.:** 10/726,401

are set forth at line 26, page 15 through line 17, page 16. These advantages are not obtained by Lee or Horvath, taken alone or in combination.

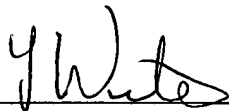
Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 5, and claims 6-8 which depend therefrom, are distinguishable from the cited prior art, taken either alone or in combination.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that any additional minor formal matters need to be addressed in order to place this application in condition for allowance, or that a telephone interview will help to materially advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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